

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1328

Introduced by Assembly Member Simitian

February 21, 2003

An act to add Section 5600.95 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to mental health.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1328, as introduced, Simitian. Mental health: simplification of accounting and reporting requirements.

Existing law provides for mental health services to be provided through various programs, many of which are administered by the counties and the State Department of Mental Health.

This bill would, to the extent that costs can be absorbed by funds budgeted to the department in the annual Budget Act, as specified, require the State Department of Mental Health, in consultation with affected parties, to examine problematic reporting requirements for various mental health programs and to convene a workgroup to make recommendations to modify these requirements to reduce unnecessary paperwork.

This bill would require the workgroup to report to the Legislature its recommendations no later than January 1, 2005, including recommendations for statutory changes necessary to reduce unnecessary and duplicative reporting requirements.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares both of the following:

(1) There exist multiple reporting requirements for providers of mental health services.

(2) The reporting requirements may result in excessive amounts of paperwork and reporting burdens on mental health providers. These multiple reporting requirements also can be inconsistent, duplicative, and expensive, thereby resulting in increased cost-of-service delivery and a reduction in available services.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to maximize the use of scarce mental health dollars for direct services and to minimize the paperwork required for providers, consistent with the existence of sufficient accountability for the use of those dollars.

SEC. 2. Section 5600.95 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

5600.95. (a) Subject to subdivision (c), the State Department of Mental Health shall, in consultation with parties affected by this section and in order to seek consistency in reporting requirements for mental health services to the maximum extent feasible, examine problematic reporting requirements imposed by local mental health agencies and the department on community mental health service providers.

(b) (1) Subject to subdivision (c), the department shall convene a workgroup consisting of representatives from the department, the California Mental Health Directors Association, and mental health service providers. The Legislature encourages the State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs to participate in the workgroup.

(2) The workgroup shall review some of the more problematic reporting requirements for mental health services and develop recommendations to modify state and county reporting requirements, where appropriate and feasible, in order to reduce unnecessary paperwork. During its deliberations, the workgroup shall, as appropriate, consult with parties affected by this section, including, but not limited to, consumers and mental health client advocates.

1 (3) The workgroup shall make its recommendations available
2 to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature
3 no later than January 1, 2005. The recommendations may include
4 statutory changes that would further reduce unnecessary and
5 duplicative reporting requirements.

6 (c) (1) The department shall implement subdivisions (a) and
7 (b) only to the extent that the costs of the activities can be absorbed
8 by the funds budgeted to the department in the annual Budget Act.

9 (2) The department may choose not to implement subdivision
10 (b), and to implement only subdivision (a), if the cost of
11 implementing only one of the two subdivisions can be absorbed by
12 the funds budgeted to the department in the annual Budget Act.

13 (3) In making determinations regarding implementation
14 pursuant to this subdivision, the department shall consider the
15 potential cost savings from the consolidation and elimination of
16 paperwork requirements that may be achieved by implementation
17 of this section.

